

## DAILY TRACKER

### NUCLEAR ISSUES

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1. In news that should worry India, Pakistan continues to expand its nuclear arsenal with more warheads, more delivery systems, and a growing fissile materials production industry, according to a report in the US-based *'Bulletin Of The Atomic Scientists'* dated 9 September. According to the publication, if the country continues in the same manner, it will have 200 warheads by 2025. "We estimate that the country's stockpile could more realistically grow to around 200 warheads by 2025 if the current trend continues," read the report prepared by Hans M Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, and Matt Korda, research associate for the NIP.

*Source:* <https://www.firstpost.com/world/pakistan-expanding-its-nuclear-arsenal-may-have-200-warheads-by-2025-us-report-9956161.html> 11 September 2021

2. On the 20th anniversary of 9/11, against the backdrop of the rushed U.S.-allied Afghanistan withdrawal, the grisly reality of armed combat and the challenge posed by asymmetric suicide terror attacks grow harder to ignore. But weapons technology has changed substantially over the past two decades. And thinking ahead to the not-so-distant future, we must ask: What if these assailants were able to remove human suicide bombers or attackers from the equation altogether? As someone who has studied and worked in artificial intelligence for the better part of four decades, I worry about such a technology threat, born from artificial intelligence and robotics.

*Source:* <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2021/09/i-weapons-are-third-revolution-warfare/620013/> 11 September 2021

### NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

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1. India's Minister of Defence, Shri Rajnath Singh, and Minister of External Affairs, Dr. S. Jaishankar, welcomed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne, and Minister for Defence, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, to New Delhi for the first India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue. Both sides welcomed the elevation of the India-Australia relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) during the Leaders' Virtual Summit held in June 2020 and noted with satisfaction the progress made in deepening bilateral cooperation in political, economic, security and defence related matters.



*Source:* <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/media-release/joint-statement-inaugural-india-australia-22-ministerial-dialogue> 11 September 2021

## MISSILES/BIO WEAPONS

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1. Although the air attacks from Yemen's Houthi rebels continue, the US has removed its most advanced missile defence system and Patriot batteries from Saudi Arabia in recent weeks. The revelation was made by the satellite images analysed by AP. As America's Gulf Arab allies nervously watched the chaotic US troops withdrawal from war-torn Afghanistan, the redeployment of the defences from Prince Sultan Air Base outside Riyadh was carried out. It also included the last-minute evacuations from Kabul airport.

*Source:* <https://www.wionews.com/world/even-as-houthi-attacks-continue-us-removes-missile-defences-in-saudi-arabia-412347> 11 September 2021

2. India's Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) programme, which aims to provide an air-defence shield from all types of hostile missiles, even the nuclear ones, is complete. The Indian Air Force is deploying all of these assets, which are developed by the country's premier defence research agency DRDO. India's BMD programme was launched after the 1999 Kargil war, keeping in mind Pakistan's expanding missile arsenal. China also played a key role in supporting Pakistan's missile programme. The homegrown BMD was two-tiered - the first layer is the Prithvi Air Defence, which can intercept and destroy missiles at exo-atmospheric altitudes of 50–180 kilometres. Pradyumna Ballistic Missile Interceptor is going to replace the Prithvi air defence, according to a defence official.

*Source:* <https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2021/09/11/explained-indias-ballistic-missile-defence-programme-developed-by-drdo.html> 11 September 2021

3. In a significant boost to India's air defence capabilities, the Indian Air Force (IAF) was handed over its first Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) system on Thursday, in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, at Jaisalmer.

*Source:* [https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/air-defence-boost-indian-air-force-gets-first-indo-israeli-missile-121091000050\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/air-defence-boost-indian-air-force-gets-first-indo-israeli-missile-121091000050_1.html) 11 September 2021



## UN REFORMS

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1. The Taliban's victory in Afghanistan might embolden other groups in different parts of the world, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has warned, expressing his worry over global terrorism while asserting that dialogue with the militant group is “absolutely essential” as the UN wants the country to play a "constructive role" in international relations.

*Source:* <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/talibans-victory-may-embolden-other-groups-across-world-un-chief/articleshow/86111460.cms> *11 September 2021*

2. New UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg has vowed to revitalise the peace process by engaging with the parties to the conflict and regional and international players. “By now, it should be obvious that the peace process has stalled for too long. The conflict parties have not discussed a comprehensive settlement since 2016. This has left Yemenis stuck in an indefinite state of war, with no clear way forward,” he told the Security Council in his first briefing as the top UN envoy for Yemen. It is therefore long overdue for the parties to engage in peaceful dialogue under UN facilitation to discuss the terms of an overarching settlement, in good faith and without preconditions, Xinhua news agency quoted Grundberg as saying.

*Source:* <https://www.thestatesman.com/world/new-un-envoy-vows-revitalise-peace-process-yemen-1503005951.html> *11 September 2021*

3. The head of the United Nations atomic agency will travel to Tehran this weekend, in a last-ditch move aimed at regaining Iranian cooperation with the agency and averting a crisis in the nuclear talks, Iranian and agency officials said Saturday. The trip is the culmination of intensive negotiations over recent days aimed at securing commitments from Iran. According to three people familiar with discussions, the trip follows an understanding between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency that Tehran will grant the agency access to reset equipment monitoring the country’s nuclear activities and resume cooperation with a probe into nuclear material found in Iran.

*Source:* <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-n-atomic-agency-chief-headed-to-iran-to-avert-crisis-over-nuclear-talks-1163136533410> *11 September 2021*

